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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6921
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0066
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0005
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 0040

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 NDJAMENA 000175

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/C AND AF/USSES - SE GRATION
NSC FOR GAVIN AND HUDSON
LONDON FOR POL - LORD
PARIS FOR POL - D'ELIA AND KANEDA
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR AU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [UN](#) [SU](#) [LY](#) [CH](#) [IS](#) [QA](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: CEDANT ARMA TOGAE? WHERE CHAD GOES FROM HERE,
MILITARILY AND DIPLOMATICALLY

REF: A. NDJAMENA 165

[B](#). NDJAMENA 163

[C](#). NDJAMENA 161

[D](#). NDJAMENA 147

[E](#). NDJAMENA 111

SUMMARY

[1](#). (SBU) The invasion of eastern Chad by Chadian rebels from Sudan, their decisive defeat by Chad government forces, and the GOC's initial reaction to those events last week confirmed a changed balance of power between Chad and Chad rebels and raised questions regarding the GOC's military and diplomatic options. Militarily, the Chadian armed forces proved that they could effectively exercise asymmetric superiority in armament and equipment to defeat dangerous rebel columns decisively. We doubt that the GOC will exercise its right of hot ground pursuit of Chad rebels into Sudan, but believe the GOC might not be able to resist using air forces to strike Chad rebel "targets of opportunity" inside Sudan in the future. Diplomatically, Chad feels that it was left isolated and abandoned by erstwhile friends and important segments of the international community. The GOC blames the AU for weak "condemnation" of the rebel aggression. N'Djamena blames both Libya and China for diluting language of the UNSC PRST. It holds China accountable for supplying arms to Sudan. The GOC expressed gratitude to the United States and France for their explicit naming of Sudan as the provenance of the rebel attacks.

[2](#). (SBU) Deby may break relations with Sudan, and withdraw from or suspend Chad's participation in efforts to mediate between Chad and Sudan by the Dakar Contact Group, the Libyans "trilaterally," and/or the Qataris. GOC thinking about relations with Sudan may be conditioned by speculation regarding the Bashir regime's own stability and Sudan's future as a nation-state, in the light of the ICC indictment, growing JEM strength, and the future of South Sudan. Chad will have to be especially careful in calibrating its criticism of Libya, given the importance of that relationship to Chad's stability and security. The GOC might explore switching its diplomatic ties back from Beijing to Taipei and re-establishing relations with Tel Aviv, although these would

be diplomatic longshots. Chad increasingly sees its relationship with MINURCAT as a strategic asset and might be amenable to an eventual expansion of MINURCAT's mandate.

13. (SBU) SE Gration's visit and our quick and specific condemnation of Chad rebel aggression have gained us credit with the GOC. If we want to exploit these gains, we recommend: a return visit by SE Gration (one-day OK) on his next travel to the region; more rapid implementation of all aspects of UNSCR 1861, another contribution to the MINURCAT Trust Fund, and assigning more military advisers to it; closer consultations with Paris and Brussels on Chad matters and regional policy; closer consultation with Libya on Chad; and increased USG support for Chad elections scheduled for 2010 and 2011. END SUMMARY.

POTENTIAL FOR MILITARY ESCALATION

14. (SBU) We believe it unlikely that GOC ground forces will cross into Sudan in hot pursuit of fleeing Chad rebels. GOC forces know they are no match for the SAF, and calculate that pursuit of rebels may lead to confrontation with SAF. We believe that it would be more likely for the GOC to use its air forces to strike Chad rebel "targets of opportunity" inside Sudan in the future. The GOC may not be able to resist the temptation to strike, and may judge that air strikes leave less of a footprint, are less easily authenticated and thus less provocative to the international community than a ground presence in Sudan. One thing appears certain: Chadian military buildup will continue, to replace

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recent losses and maintain or even increase N,Djamena,s asymmetrical advantage over the Chadian rebels. Where the money will come from is an "imponderable," as our French friends say.

CHAD-SUDAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

15. (SBU) The GoC is thinking in terms of both short- and long-term measures in response to what it considers Sudan,s aggression in the form of attacks by Chadian rebels. Khartoum broke relations with Chad in May 2008 in response to a JEM attack on Omdurman, without the sky falling. On May 9, Deby publicly threatened to sever relations with Khartoum; announced the closure of GOS-sponsored cultural and educational institutions; ordered the expulsion of Sudanese employees; and directed his PM to form a commission to study next moves vis--vis Sudan, as well as other diplomatic responses to the recent Chad rebel incursion.

16. (SBU) GOC thinking about Sudan in the longer term may be conditioned by speculation regarding the Bashir regime,s own stability and Sudan,s future as a nation-state, both of which have been undermined by the ICC indictment of Bashir, the growing strength of the JEM rebellion, and the undecided future of South Sudan. The Chadians may be checking the CPA calendar, calculating the days until referenda in Abyei and the South are due. The GOC may believe that in the Deby vs. Bashir struggle, time is now on Chad,s side, with the clock ticking on the ICC and CPA issues.

CHAD, DAKAR, AND DOHA

17. (SBU) Deby has decried AU lack of support publicly and privately, and considers that both the AU and the Arab League are anti-Chadian, as a result of manipulation by his enemies. Deby sees the UNSC as ineffectual on account of Chinese and Libyan obstructionism. The result may be that Chad suspends or ends its participation in mediation efforts by the Dakar

Accord's Contact Group (Libya is a co-chair), Libya's trilateral "mechanism," and the Government of Qatar. Deby announced last week that he had charged the Prime Minister with overseeing a GOC commission to recommend diplomatic steps that Chad should take in light of recent events. FORMIN Faki told us last week that the GOC would be consulting with its friends, including the U.S., as it decides what courses of action to take.

CHAD/LIBYA

¶18. (SBU) In recent years, Libya has been a valuable ally to Chad, and essential to Chad's stability and security, but Tripoli's failure to offer active support and its unhelpful stance at the UNSC have left Chad feeling doubly victimized. Deby will have to play this hand carefully and likely will not risk alienating Qaddafi by going too far in pointing out what N'Djamena considers Libya's errors of judgment and lack of loyalty to the reliable friend that Deby considers himself to be to "the Guide."

CHAD UN/MINURCAT

¶19. (SBU) Chad increasingly sees its relationship with MINURCAT as more of a strategic asset than a strategic problem. SRSNG Angelo has increasing credibility with the GOC and with Deby personally. We should keep this in mind as we decide how to craft our own Chad policy. MINURCAT's goals and ours are very close if not identical. Supporting MINURCAT both diplomatically and concretely achieves USG aims. We might even see Chad agreeing to an eventual

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expansion of MINURCAT's now-limited mandate, geographically beyond eastern Chad and also substantively into the political sphere.

WILD CARDS/LONGSHOTS

¶10. (SBU) CHAD/CHINA: This could get really interesting. Chad most recently switched its diplomatic ties from Taiwan to China in 2006, but it has switched back and forth a number of times previously. We assess that Chinese economic assistance to Chad is the price Beijing has agreed to pay for the switch, rather than economic exploitation of Chad facilitated by the switch. If so, the GOC may see an opportunity in its perception of Chinese perfidy in its relations with Khartoum in general and the UNSC PSRT in particular. The GOC could switch again, exacting a price from Taiwan as it exacted a price from Beijing in 2006.

¶11. (SBU) CHAD/ISRAEL: Another interesting possibility. The idea of Chad and Israel re-establishing formal diplomatic relations has been floating around for some time. (Chad once had relations with Tel Aviv, long since lapsed, and cafes in the vicinity of former Israeli property still bear names involving "Shalom." The GOC continues to buy arms from Israeli merchants.) Former FORMIN Allam-Mi told Ambassador Nigro in April 2008 that he expected that the bilateral relationship could be re-established "before the summer." That did not happen, but Deby's ire against what he has often called an "Arab conspiracy" to "Islamize and Arabize" Chad by force might translate into a willingness to play this card.

OLD RELIABLE

¶12. (SBU) CHAD/FRANCE/EU: France continues as Chad's most

important and reliable international partner. France is responsible for the robust nature of the EU,s investment in Chad, was the motor behind EUFOR,s deployment as a bridge to MINURCAT, and the prime force behind MINURCAT as well. (The French "master plan" for Chad involves a gradual diminution of bilateral implication in Chadian affairs, after plugging the EU and UN into the equation to replace France and French resources.)

CHAD AND THE UNITED STATES

¶13. (SBU) We have recently gained credit with President Deby by quickly issuing a condemnation of Chad rebel aggression, by naming Sudan as the rebel base, and thanks to the excellent impression that SE Gration made on Deby, who responded actively to the SE's request for GOC help with the JEM (Ref D). If the USG decides to exploit these gains, we recommend consideration of possible measures we have detailed (in Ref E) to reinforce Chad diplomatically and politically. We should consider:

-- A return visit by SE Gration (one-day OK) on his next travel to the region;

-- More rapid implementation of all aspects of UNSCR 1861, making a voluntary contribution to the UN's Trust Fund, and assigning more military advisers to MINURCAT;

-- Closer consultations with Paris and Brussels on Chad matters and regional policy;

-- Closer consultation with Libya on Chad;

-- Increased USG support for Chad elections scheduled for 2010 and 2011.

NIGRO